

Rangeland Management Specialist Report

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Affected Environment

Livestock grazing management activities occur on established active grazing allotments and are permitted by the issuance and administration of grazing permits for a ten-year period. Livestock are grazed through various management schemes that are intended to provide some level of improvement or maintenance of satisfactory soil, water, and vegetation resources. There are 104 cattle grazing allotments on the Tonto NF. One sheep driveway extends northeast from Mesa to the northeast corner of the forest, where it enters the Apache-Sitgreaves national forests.

Typical livestock grazing management activities include using ranch horses to move livestock from one pasture to another, using vehicles and livestock trailers to transport livestock and feed to and from pastures located off the national forest, and holding livestock for short periods of time in working corrals to facilitate normal processing that includes sorting, branding, dehorning, and other practices.

Environmental Consequences

Rangeland resource effects will not be any more or any less under Proposed Action than current Tonto National Forest Plan (1985, as amended) since total user days, as proposed, will not change. The following table reflects current and proposed effects by activity. Mitigations now in place will remain for the Proposed Action.

Possible Effects by Activity

Riding/ Packing Stock	Hiking	Hunting	River Running	OHV	OHVNM	Scuba	Fishing Guiding
<p>Possible invasive plant parts introduction as a result of bringing hay and/or feed grains onto forest land.</p> <p>Possible invasive plant parts introduction as a result of passage of viable seeds through rumen.</p> <p>Possible invasive plant parts introduction as a result of carrying plant parts that cling to stock and/or riders and are left behind on forest land.</p> <p>Incidental removal of plant parts from Forest land by animal ingestion.</p> <p>Possible deposition of animal fecal matter into water bodies.</p> <p>Possible introduction of invasive plant parts</p>	<p>Possible introduction of invasive plant parts via motor vehicles used in conjunction with activity.</p> <p>Possible invasive plant parts introduction as a result of carrying plant parts that cling hikers and are left behind on forest land.</p> <p>Trampling of plants and possible soil erosional effects.</p> <p>Deliberately or inadvertently leaving gates open, causing unauthorized use by livestock.</p>	<p>Possible introduction of invasive plant parts via motor vehicles used in conjunction with activity.</p> <p>Possible invasive plant parts introduction as a result of carrying plant parts that cling to hunters and are left behind on forest land.</p> <p>Trampling of plants and possible soil erosional effects.</p>	<p>Not expected to affect rangeland resources</p>	<p>Possible invasive plant parts introduced as a result of carrying plant parts that cling to vehicles and/or riders and are left behind on forest land.</p> <p>Possible loss of vegetation and soil as a result tire disturbance.</p> <p>Possible introduction of invasive plant parts via other motor vehicles used in conjunction with activity.</p> <p>Deliberately or inadvertently leaving gates open, causing unauthorized use by livestock.</p>	<p>Possible loss of vegetation and soil as a result tire disturbance.</p> <p>Possible invasive plant parts introduction as a result of carrying plant parts that cling to recreationists and are left behind on Forest land.</p> <p>Possible introduction of invasive plant parts via motor vehicles used in conjunction with activity.</p> <p>Deliberately or inadvertently leaving gates open, causing unauthorized use by livestock.</p>	<p>Possible introduction of invasive plant parts via motor vehicles used in conjunction with activity.</p>	<p>Possible introduction of invasive plant parts via motor vehicles used in conjunction with activity.</p> <p>Trampling of plants and possible soil erosional effects.</p> <p>Deliberately or inadvertently leaving gates open, causing unauthorized use by livestock.</p>

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via motor vehicles used in conjunction with activity.							
Trampling of plants and possible soil erosional effects.							
Deliberately or inadvertently leaving gates open, causing unauthorized use by livestock.							

Alternatives Compared

Rangeland Resource	Alternative 1	Alternative 2 Proposed Action
Invasive Plant Introductions	Possibility of introductions remains same, since no change in Outfitter/Guide management. Relevant laws to protect rangeland resources from invasive species are: U.S.F.S. Tonto NF, subpart B, Order No. 12-10-231-2R. The Forest Service has finalized the development of an internal directive to Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2900 for invasive species Management (see relevant laws section).	Expected to remain same, since total days impacts remain same for Outfitter/Guide management.
Loss of vegetation and/or soils by vehicles, foot traffic, OHV, OHVNM, and pack/riding stock	Possibility of vegetation and soil loss remain same since no change in Outfitter/Guide management	Expected to remain same, since total days impacts remain same for Outfitter/Guide management
Over-utilization of plants in unauthorized pastures due to recreationists leaving gates open	Possibility of vegetation overutilization remain same since no change in Outfitter/Guide management	Expected to remain same, since total days impacts remain same for Outfitter/Guide management
Trampling of plants and possible soil erosional and/or compaction effects.	Possibility of trampling of plants, erosion, and compaction of soils remain same since no change in Outfitter/Guide management	Expected to remain same, since total days impacts remain same for Outfitter/Guide management

Relevant Laws and Regulations

- 1) U.S.F.S. Tonto National Forest, Special Restrictions and Use, Order No. 12-10-231-2R (11) (2010).

Prohibitions: Possessing, storing or transporting any part of a tree or other plant, as specified in the order (*36 CFR 261.58(t)*).

Any plant material defined by the state of Arizona as “forage,” which includes hay, straw, mulch, cubes, feed grain, and pellets which is not certified and identified by the Arizona Crop Improvement Association (ACIA) as “Certified Noxious Weed Free Forage and Mulch,” or is not otherwise certified outside the State of Arizona as compliant with other state certified weed free programs.

- 2) Forest Service Manual 2900 Final Directive, published in Federal Register v.76 No. 233, 12-5-2011.

Final Policy or Principles

a. When Applicable, invasive species management actions and standards should be incorporated into resource management plans at the forest level...